

# THE CHAMPION

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No. 16

## AWFUL CALAMITY

### San Francisco Razed to the Ground by fire and Earthquake.

The most dreadful disaster that has ever visited the American continent within the memory of man came upon San Francisco this week. It was at 5 a. m. Wednesday morning, April 18 that a violent earthquake shock or series of shocks that lasted three minutes in which the largest and most substantial business blocks, shook, swayed, tottered and burying thousands of people in their ruins.

Fire broke out and the fire department could do little to stay the flames before their power house and apparatus were wrecked. With the falling of the buildings fire broke out in many different places and the latest reports, which are telegrams from Oakland, across the bay from San Francisco, state that at 11 p. m. Wednesday night the whole city seems doomed. The telegraph station at San Francisco was wrecked early in the day and no telegraphic word can come from the scene of horrors except as seen at some distance away.

At this dreadful catastrophe the whole American continent stands aghast. In twenty-four hours one of our most substantial and progressive cities is reduced to dust and ashes, with no single home of its many thousands unharmed.

While San Francisco is the principal sufferer, the entire section was more or less damaged by the earthquake. and numerous smaller towns were severely damaged with some loss of life.

The Tampa Tribune publishes in today's (Thursday's) daily, a special bulletin sent by the Associated press at 2 a. m. this morning, which says that the latest reports indicate that conditions are much worse than at first reported.

## ABOUT DIVISION

### THE LIGHT THROWN ON THIS QUESTION.

Judging from two communications from Wauchula received at this office some of the citizens of that place are very ignorant of the facts about division. We quote one of the letters:

Wauchula, Florida, 4-17th, 1906.  
D. CHAMPION,  
Arcadia.  
DEAR SIR:  
It seems that since the County Division question has got up that you are selfish only and not for the people at large, so I will ask you to discontinue your paper at once.

Yours Truly,

Either the writer has been grossly deceived on the subject or he is one of those who will not learn the truth because he has already made up his mind against it. We will not believe the latter and in the hope that he may see why division is not best for the people in general and certainly not for himself in particular, we submit the following facts that are true and can be verified by the county records.

Our correspondent is a man of family who wants to see his family properly educated, and division as it will affect the schools of his county, providing he gets a new county, should have a very prominent place in his mind. Now for the facts. The total assessment of the property of DeSoto county as stands is \$76,598, of which over 18,000 goes to the State fund. This leaves less than \$57,000 due for county uses. Part of this will not be collected. The taxes paid in this year one week after the usual time of the closing of the tax books amounted to less than \$50,000. After deducting tax collector's and treasurer's commis-

sions and the state tax from this we have considerably less than \$15,000 which would be, if the county is divided, the proportion due each county. This sum must cover the expenses of the county such as county courts, roads, bridges, commissioners' expenses as well as many other expenses, besides the schools.

The Wauchula end of the county has a larger proportion of schools than any other, almost one half of those in the county being located in the proposed northern county. The schools in that territory last year cost almost, if not quite, as much as the entire tax collected from that part of the county.

The State law fixes the limit of school tax at eight mills, with an additional three mills special district tax or eleven mills in all. Wauchula is paying this eleven mills school tax, but that but pays a little more than half that the schools in her territory have cost the county.

Division means either reducing the number of months of schools or increasing the tax. As the tax is already up to the State limit the only way the schools can be kept up to their present condition is by an increased assessment value. This increased assessment cannot be used for school tax alone. For the State gets its divide and Wauchula county would pay considerably more than her pro rata of the State taxes.

To our Division friends we would say, "Count the cost."

We earnestly recommend that they take time to give an unprejudiced investigation before they vote for division.

### Division.

The air seems to be full of division these days. It is division north of me and division south of me. Some way or another I am

so blind I cannot see that it is best.

That sometime it may be advisable I do not question but that it is time now I seriously doubt.

I trust I am self sacrificing enough to be willing to pay some additional taxes to benefit even a goodly portion of my neighbors but so far I have been unable to see where it will benefit only a very few and they, only where the new county seats may be located.

In the first place neither Polk or DeSoto are densely enough populated to warrant a division. We only have a reasonably dense population on the western border and it must be some years before the eastern portion of the county is settled to any extent.

It does not seem to me it ought to take very long or very deep investigation to see that three sets of county officers will cost greatly more than one.

It is said there will not be so much to do. We can get cheaper men. For one I have had enough of cheap men and if any of you go to sell a piece of DeSoto county land and get an abstract of title if you don't see the trail of cheap men all through the abstract of title then your experience will be vastly different from mine. The talk that the rate of taxation is limited is only to mislead while it is true the rate is limited the valuation is not and it will be found it takes more hard earned dollars to settle the tax collector's bill after division than before and that to continue year after year.

Neither can I see that an acre of my Florida sand will produce a bushel more corn or potatoes or take a drop less sweat out of me or the old white mule or a pound less fertilizer after division than before.

Though the new county might be named Paradise and the county seat Beulah to me these are some of the facts that I have to face squarely.

I have been a tax payer here now for nearly a quarter of a century and the tax receipts signed by the collector of Manatee county, which it was twenty-five years ago, and the same receipt signed by the collector of DeSoto county, as it now is, have a sobering effect on a man and there are a good many of you that ought to be able to get the same kind of evidence. If you really enjoy paying taxes then of course you will vote for division. I get all of it I really enjoy as it is. I live about as far from a county seat as the most of the citizens of DeSoto and I do not see that I have suffered greatly in flesh and morals or purse. If I get to where I cannot go any further without seeing the county seat the A. C. L. gives cheap excursions every summer and I can go to Arcadia and spend a day or two and pay railroad fare a good many times over rather than settle the additional taxes that division will mean to me and every other man that is trying to get grits and clothes out of Florida sand.

IRVING KECK,  
Bowling Green, Fla.

### Lily Heard From.

EDITOR CHAMPION: Will you kindly allow the writer a little valuable space in your most excellent paper to ask a few questions concerning the subject of county division?

We would like to see it published (Continued of Last Page)

## STATE W. C. T. U.

### AN ACCOUNT OF THEIR MEETING AT GAINESVILLE.

The Woman's Christian Temperance Union of Florida met in annual session at Gainesville on April 10-13. Fifty-four delegates were in attendance every part of the state being represented, from Ft. Myers to Tallahassee and Jacksonville.

The sessions were held in the Baptist church each day and at night in the large public school auditorium. While the day meetings were largely occupied by the business of the organization and attended mainly by ladies interested in temperance the night meetings were more on the order of instruction and entertainment, and were largely attended by ladies, children and gentlemen. Very interesting programs were given each of the three nights during the session. The opening night was devoted to addresses of welcome by the mayor and other public men of Gainesville, responded to by the W. C. T. U. workers, fine music by local talent, etc. The second night Mrs. Newton, of Virginia, made an interesting address. Mrs. Newton is one of the National Organizers who has been spending the winter in Florida and hers were words of wisdom eagerly listened to.

The last night was the most largely attended by all for three young men and three young women from the Gainesville public school gave temperance recitations for a W. C. T. U. Medal Contest. The recitations of each of the young people were applauded and each one was remembered by gifts of lovely flowers. The son of Tom McBeath—young Tom—won first prize of the boys. His work was excellent. A pleasant feature of the evening was marching to music of a band of thirty or so white clad girls who waved white flags and sang a temperance song. Two little misses from Jacksonville, aged eight and six recited to the unbounded delight and applause of the large audience.

The elegant home of Mayor Thomas was thrown open for a reception to the W. C. T. U. delegates one afternoon, when a couple of hours, from 4 to 6 p. m., was spent in delightful social converse; light refreshments were served. A carriage drive was also tendered the visiting guests who were delighted with the many elegant homes, the lovely shaded streets and the substantial business houses.

The Gainesville W. C. T. U. is about sixty strong and by their efforts Gainesville is supplied with a public drinking fountain, at a cost of over \$500. This fountain runs ice water during the summer, the gentlemen of the city contributing to the ice fund. The State Convention met at the fountain at the close of the carriage drive, and held a little praise service to commemorate the placing of the fountain.

The Convention elected as state officials the following: For president Miss Minnie E. Neal, of DeLand, whose annual address was on this occasion a very able effort; for vice-president Mrs. W. V. Knott, of Tallahassee, who

served in the same capacity last year; Mrs. Anthony, of Lake City, was elected corresponding secretary; Mrs. Dean, of DeLand, recording secretary, and Mrs. Doig, of Gainesville, treasurer. A number of district presidents were appointed, Mrs. Laycock, of Ft. Myers, for our end of the state. The Ft. Myers union also was presented a banner given for the union making the largest increase in membership for the past year.

Several of the superintendents of different departments were changed owing to resignation or removal of former superintendents. It was noticeable that the state organization is now largely composed of new material, many of the old officials, either having left the state or resigned in favor of younger and more active members.

Prominent among the life long workers who were in attendance at the Gainesville Convention were Mrs. L. E. French, of Alachua county, an eighty year old veteran who is spry and alert in thought as any member who was there. Mrs. Crews, another mother in Israel, from Jacksonville, shed the benediction of her presence, giving words of help and comfort.

Perhaps the most important resolution passed by the Convention was the one concerning the securing of temperance legislators, the local unions being urged to throw their influence to elect men to the next legislature who will promise to vote for temperance legislation. Another resolution of almost equal importance was one asking the unions to donate ten cents of each annual membership fee to a fund for expenses in conducting a temperance political campaign, the said fund to be placed in the hands of state president, Miss Neal, of DeLand, who is also superintendent of the temperance legislation department of the W. C. U. A new editor was chosen for the temperance column in the Times-Union, Mrs. Adams, and the organization voted to pay the presidents expenses to the National Convention.

Many other measures of importance came before the body, but time and space forbids further mention now.

The delegates left for their homes on Friday feeling that the meeting had been one of the best ever held in the state. The spirit of harmony and good fellowship that prevailed was very noticeable. The hospitality of the people, the beauty of the city, and the good work accomplished will not be soon forgotten.

### Ladies' Friday Musicales.

The Ladies' Friday Musicales met with Mrs. J. H. Treadwell April 13.

Following was the program:  
Pioneer, Vernar.....  
Mrs. W. H. Seward  
Silvery Showers.....  
Mrs. Mitchell  
Duett, Melody of Love, Engelman,  
Mesdames Chollar and R. E. Brown  
Beautiful Star of Heaven,  
Drumheller.....  
Mrs. R. E. Whidden  
Rustic Dance, Howard.....  
Mrs. J. N. Hollingsworth  
Love's Lament, Eaton.....  
Mrs. R. E. Brown

After a short business session the club adjourned to meet with Mrs. Seward, April 20.

The weather is quite cool for this time of year.